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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - TEXT

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [LE](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: MGLE01: MINDEF MURR OFFERS THEORY ON BLUE LINE
VIOLENCE

REF: BEIRUT 1690

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S) Summary and comment: In a 6/1 meeting with the Ambassador, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Elias Murr said that Hizballah was the primary instigator of Sunday's Blue Line incidents (reftel) but had seriously miscalculated, believing that the Israeli response would be limited to Palestinian targets. Murr's colorful conspiracy theory weaved together multiple local and regional players. He said that he did not believe that Israel had assassinated the Majzoub brothers in Sidon that served as the pretext for the Sunday rockets. Describing them as key Hizballah-PIJ liaisons very close to Hassan Nasrallah, Murr claimed that Jordanian intelligence had reasons for wanting the Majzoubs dead. As for the sniper attack that reignited the fighting on Sunday after a tentative ceasefire, Murr pointed the finger to Fatah, claiming that Fatah hoped for the Israeli attacks on Hizballah facilities as a way to get at PIJ. While Murr's theories at times seem to cross the line into pure fantasy, we are reporting them as indication of the mystery that still hovers over the 5/28 Israeli-Lebanese skirmish. End summary and comment.

12. (S) The Ambassador asked Murr for his analysis of the 5/28 incidents (reftel). Citing what he claimed were many internal confidential reports, Murr said that he concluded that Hizballah had seriously miscalculated in provoking Israel. While Hizballah was trying to put a brave face on 5/28, in fact Hizballah fixed infrastructure had been widely damaged. By launching the rocket attack on Israel early in 5/28, Hizballah assumed Israel would only attack Palestinian positions, given the linkage between the 5/28 rocket and the 5/26 assassinations of the two Majzoub brothers in Sidon (widely -- although perhaps erroneously -- assumed to have been carried out by Israel). But Israel took the opportunity of the sniper attack later in the day to wipe out newly constructed Hizballah positions. Murr expressed satisfaction in Israel's "smart" response, which "badly hurt" Hizballah.

13. (S) The Ambassador asked Murr whether he thought, then, that the initial rocket fired toward Safed, Israel, was fired by Hizballah, as his explanation indicated. "No, PIJ," Murr corrected himself. The Ambassador expressed disbelief, noting that, while PFLP-GC and Hizballah had rockets, PIJ was not assumed to have them. Counseling the Ambassador to look at PIJ as a "subsidiary" of Hizballah in Lebanon, Murr claimed that PIJ operatives received a Hizballah rocket to fire. Hizballah wanted to maintain some deniability, but

Murr was sure that Hizballah had in fact facilitated PIJ's cross-border attack, especially given the fact that the attack occurred in an area under Hizballah control. The whole point was to simultaneously show revenge for the Majzoub brothers' death, scare Israel by demonstrating longer-range rockets, and provoke an Israeli attack that would give credence to Hizballah's case for the "resistance" during the upcoming National Dialogue session. But the key was the PIJ connection, so that the Israelis would concentrate on Lebanese targets.

14. (S) This worked until the sniper fire from southern Lebanon into Israel, Murr said. Hizballah had not counted on the massive, targetted Israeli retaliation, which Murr said "scared" Hizballah. The Ambassador asked who the sniper was. "Fatah," Murr responded with confidence. The Ambassador again expressed disbelief, wondering how a Fatah operative could move about freely in Hizballah controlled territory. Fatah's motives, Murr said, were to get the Israelis to attack Hizballah facilities, as a way to get the Israelis to attack PIJ's Lebanese ally. The Ambassador noted that the intra-Palestinian fighting now seemed to be concentrated on Fatah-Hamas rivalries, with PIJ largely out of it. Why would Fatah want an attack on Hizballah, since Hizballah would surely figure this out and engage PIJ against Fatah at a time when Fatah should be concentrating its energies against Hamas? Murr insisted that he had credible information suggesting that Sunday's sniper was indeed from Fatah.

15. (S) The Ambassador asked Murr if he believed Israel had indeed killed the Majzoub brothers on Friday (5/26), the assassinations that provided the pretext for Sunday's fighting. No, Murr responded. Taking his conspiracy theories to a new level, he said that he suspected Jordanian intelligence had a role. The Ambassador again expressed disbelief. Murr initiated a long explanation into the importance of the Majzoub brothers. More Hizballah than PIJ,

he said, they were in fact Hassan Nasrallah's personal liaisons to PIJ and to other terrorist groups. They were among the innermost circle of Nasrallah's advisors, Murr said, with Nasrallah "shocked" by their deaths. As for the Jordanians, they knew that the Majzoub brothers had, on behalf of Hizballah, provided funding to terrorists operating in and through Jordan. This included some help to the 2005 Jordanian hotel bombers, Murr said. The Ambassador expressed deep skepticism that Jordan would risk opening up a battle front with Hizballah by sending assassins to Lebanon. Murr acknowledged that "more study is needed," but he expressed confidence in his theory. But the main question now before Lebanon, Murr said, is "what will Hizballah do next? They were hit hard. They must do something to show their own people they are strong, but what will it be?"

FELTMAN